RESTORATION REVIEW

My proposition is: It is right, appropriate, and scriptural for us to "walk" (have fellowship) with a person insofar as he or she "walks" with Christ. Or to put it another way, Since fellowship is in Jesus Christ, we can enjoy fellowship with all those in Christ.

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Jesus Christ: Basis of Fellowship

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The Sense of Scripture: Studies in Interpretation . . .

BEYOND THE ORIGINAL MEANING

> The study of criticism has apparently blinded the commentators to the fact that the books on which they are writing are *bits of the Bible* — that but for that fact they would in all probability never have reached us - and that *the chief business of the commentator* is *to elucidate their significance as vehicles of revelation. —James Denney*

This quotation will mean more to you when you know that James Denney was not only "that prince among Scottish New Testament exegetes," as one of his colleagues described him, but also a great preacher. He was one of the few theologians in his day who was also an effective evangelist. In his case at least theology and evangelism *did* mix. He moved people's hearts when he described the suffering love of God as revealed in the crucifixion of Christ. He had a way of raising one arm aloft and pointing to it with the other as if pointed to the Cross, and crying out, *That is how God loves!*

In his efforts to make the Christian message relevant to our modern age, Denney was critical of those commentators who supposed their task was done when they had ascertained the *original* meaning of Scripture, as the quotation indicates. Denney believed in the findings of modern biblical criticism and the role it plays in ascertaining the correct text and determining the original meaning of the writer. But he was convinced that the study of criticism has blinded most interpreters in that it led them to suppose that their work was done when they had determined what the original writer had in mind.

And so he lays out what he sees as the task of the interpreter, which is the thesis of this essay: *the chief business of the commentator is to elucidate their significance as vehicles of revelation.* He is saying that it is not enough to determine what a given passage meant to the original writer and to those who read it in his day. It must be interpreted for our generation and applied to our situation. *What does it mean to us?* is the question Denney wants answered. An interpreter has not finished his task, he believed, until he relates the Bible to the here and now and causes it to live and have power in our lives today.

You don't need anyone else to register this complaint for you, for you have often heard some preacher say, after delving into the Greek and the customs of the ancient world, "This is what Jesus meant" or "This is what Paul had in mind," and yet you were left asking yourself what the passage should mean to you. It is one thing to determine what the Sermon on the Mount meant to a first-century Graeco-Roman-Jewish culture (and that is

no mean task!) and another thing to interpret it for an executive on Madison Ave. in New York City in the 1980's. What Paul's Corinthian correspondence meant to a half-slave population of an ancient Greek city may be different from what it should mean to a congregation of West Texas ranchers. We agree with Denney that it is essential to apply the findings of biblical criticism and ascertain the original intention of the writer and what it meant in his day, but this is only the starting point. We must go on and show how those ancient documents have relevance to our day and to our problems. We can't leave people dangling in the first century.

In reference to what Paul meant in Corinthians, a brother said to me recently in reference to a piece I published in this journal on the role of women in the church, "There's no question as to what Paul wrote about the ministry of women in the first-century church, but how are we to deal with the ministry of women in the church today?" The brother raised the same issue that concerned Denney. That the Corinthians would conclude from what Paul wrote that women were to be silent in the assembly does not *necessarily* mean that the 20th century church would reach the same conclusion. Two thousand years of history and dramatic changes in culture might make a difference in how the Bible is to be interpreted.

Do you have a problem with Denney's use of "vehicles of revelation" in reference to the Scriptures? Or is the Bible a revelation as it stands and not just a vehicle of revelation? Denney would agree that there is a sense in which the Bible is a revelation even if one never opens it, for it does, potentially at least, disclose the mind of God. But revelation has no meaning except in terms of what it means to us in a practical and useful way. The Bible is a revelation of God to you only as it reaches your heart and mind. But if you always have it hung on you what it meant to someone else twenty centuries ago, it is not going to disclose God's will to you in the here and now. So, the Scriptures are a vehicle of revelation in that, when properly interpreted and applied, they bring the meaning of ancient documents into your life today. And it is the responsibility of the Bible teacher to do that rather than to confine himself to the first century.

The story of Jesus washing his disciples' feet is a case in point. Once we confront the stunning facts of what Jesus did in that instance and inform ourselves in reference to the custom of footwashing, we are ready for a meaningful interpretation. What does this story mean to us? It certainly does not mean that we are to go around washing feet in our modern world, which would be viewed as bizarre at best, even though Jesus said, "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet." It means that he has called us to a life of service and that we are to "wash feet" by

acts of love and kindness. We are to be humble, eager to serve others rather than to be served. It means that we are to show loving kindness in many humble and condescending ways.

Take this obscure story back in the Old Testament, which could easily remain hidden and meaningless as well as boring. In Jer. 34 the Israelites made a covenant with each other, probably in all sincerity, to free their fellow Jews who served them as slaves, which the law said was to be done every seventh year. They were led to do this since the Babylonian army was virtually at their door, threatening to capture them and take them into captivity, as Jeremiah was prophesying. After all, who needs a slave in time of crisis! The Babylonians withdrew from their environs for a time in order to deal with the troublesome Egyptians. Once the crisis passed, the people revoked their covenant and again enslaved the ones they had freed. This of course made Jeremiah fightin' mad and he laid God's judgment upon them, assuring them that the Babylonians would return and bring with them the sword, pestilence, and famine.

If we merely learn the facts of this story, there is nothing there for us. But it can become a "vehicle of revelation" when we realize that we should not be too critical of those Israelites for what they did, for we remember those times of crisis when we resolved to treat someone better or love someone more or be more faithful to God only to forget such resolutions when the crisis passed. Many a father has resolved to give his child more of his life when the child was sick unto death only to forget his good intentions once the child was well again.

If the Holy Spirit smites your conscience and stirs up your sincere mind in such a manner when you read that story, then Jer. 34 becomes the word of God to you. Otherwise it is only boring history, dead words upon a page. It is the interpreter's task to elucidate the meaning of Scripture for the modern mind.

These familiar lines from Ecc. 3 also serve to show that the task of the exegete is not a simple one:

> For everything there is a season,
> and a time for every matter under heaven:
> a time to be born, and a time to die;
> a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
> a time to kill, and a time to heal;
> a time to break down, and a time to build up;
> a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
> a time to mourn, and a time to dance.

It goes on like that, verse after verse, with a time for this and a time for that. One might suppose that this is saying that life is ordered for us and so there is an appropriate time for all these things. But the meaning would come near to being the opposite, that the tapestry of life is puzzling and unexplainable. It is more cynical than it is hopeful. "This happens and that happens, and that is life, and does it really make sense?" is sort of what the writer is saying. The key is verse 11: "God had made everything beautiful in its time; also he has put eternity into man's mind, yet so that he cannot find out what God had done from the beginning to the end."

The Hebrew word for "eternity" would best be translated *enigma* or *mystery:* "God has put a sense of mystery in man" and so he can only wonder what God is up to. The passage is assuring us that life is an enigma and may not make sense, for God has chosen not to tell us the great secret of the purpose of life. Our mission is to accept life as we find it, the evil as well as the good, and to live it abundantly, and not to suppose that we have to explain it.

One of the most comforting passages in all of Scripture, Rom. 8:37-39, has elements in it that are both strange and meaningless to modern ears, rooted as they are to the age in which the words were written:

> In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who called us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The ancient world feared things that we do not even believe in, much less fear. Who today is worried about principalities or powers or heights or depths? To the ancients these referred to things that haunted their lives: the tyranny of the stars and angels that dominated their lives. In assuring them of protection against "height" and "depth" Paul is telling them that the stars in their rising and setting cannot hurt them or separate them from God's love. But what does that mean to us? We are to go beyond the original meaning and see in this passage that nuclear weapons, terrorists, old age, Alzheimer's, AIDS, drugs, cancer, and senility cannot separate us from God's love.

It is not enough for us to learn that in the Parable of the Prodigal Son the compassionate father to Jesus stood for God, the elder brother the Pharisees, and the prodigal the outcasts that Jesus befriended. For our time the younger son can stand for all those who are "fed up" with "the system" and are ready to chunk the whole sordid mess of

trying to conform to the world and all its superficial standards. The elder son can stand for all "play it safe, take no chances" Christians who turn a cold, rejecting eye upon their adventurous and rebellious contemporaries.

So, I am suggesting a "then and now" rule of interpreting the Bible. We must go beyond what it meant *then* to what it means to us *now.* The difference may be crucial, such as in the myth that our task today is to restore the primitive church. We have no such task, for such is impossible. It is as impossible as it is to ignore two thousand years of history and culture. We would all be shocked at the idea of being exactly like the primitive church if we could be transported back over the centuries and see what those churches were really like.

Our mission is of a different sort. It is not to do precisely what they did in every detail (assuming this could be determined, which it cannot) but to do for our generation what they did for theirs, *in the spirit of Christ.* Surely the Scriptures serve as our norm in doing this, and there are principles and ideals that are timeless and always applicable, but we cannot suppose the New Testament to be a kind of blueprint in which every *i* is dotted and every *t* crossed in mandating the character of the church, thus making every congregation, both then and now, exactly alike. It is evident that even the New Testament congregations were not carbon copies of each other. *—the Editor*

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THE TRANSFORMING FRIENDSHIP

I have called you friends. . . You are my friends if you do whatever I command you. – Jn. 15:15, 14

There may be those who have difficulty relating to Jesus as Savior and Lord or as High Priest and King or as Creator and Judge, for these are weighty theology. At least when they are young in the faith or yet have no faith at all. Even to those of us who think of ourselves as mature Christians a theology about Christ, particularly in reference to such ideas as vicarious suffering and preexistence, may be little more than things we are supposed to believe but which have little relevance to our lives.

Faith might start and grow from a different perspective, that of Jesus as friend. This would enable us to move more easily from the natural to the supernatural, from the human to the divine. Those who cannot yet see Jesus as God might see him as ideal manhood, as a man who becomes their friend.

Even when we have no problem in believing in the supernatural Christ, whether in terms of eternal Logos or glorified Savior, we are to recognize that there is another side to our faith, the Jesus of history, the *man* of Nazareth, or the Son of Man, to use Jesus' own description of himself, a term all too human for Jesus' followers to apply to him.

When Jesus stood before Pilate wearing a purple robe and a crown of thorns, the Roman governor was moved to say of him, "Behold, the man!," or if he spoke in his native Latin, "Ecce homo!," *Behold, a man!* We can only guess what Pilate really meant. He may have meant as he looked upon this helpless figure, beaten and mocked as a king, "Look at this man that you consider so dangerous, how could he be a threat to Caesar?" But he may have meant, schooled as he was in the wisdom of Cicero, who wrote in search of ideal manhood, "Here at last is a real man, even among you despicable Jews, a man such as the Romans themselves have idealized." Knowing men as Pilate surely did, he soon realized not only that Jesus was innocent, but that his virtue stood out in bold contrast to the treachery of his persecutors.

In any event, Pilate provides us with one of the most meaningful and profound statements about Christ in the New Testament. While John the Baptist gives us, "Behold, the lamb of God," Pilate gives us, "Behold, the man." That Jesus was a man - all that God could expect in a man -is where our faith can begin. He was and is in fact *the* man, ideal manhood, so much so that he could only be divine. As we, like Pilate, behold the man, we can agree with the poetic line, *Jesus, divinest when Thou art man.*

To see in Jesus of Nazareth all the ingredients of ideal humanity perfectly harmonized is not to deny his divinity. It is through his manhood that we see what God is like. When Jesus said to Philip in Jn. 14:9, "He who has seen me has seen the Father," we are informed that it is the *person* of Jesus that reveals the nature of God. It is not the miracles of Christ that convinces us, however impressive these are, for he himself said, "He who believes in me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do" (Jn. 14:10). If we believe in Christ because of his miracles, we may have to believe in others for the same reason. We believe in Jesus because of who he is and what he is. It is first of all the life he lived on this earth as a person like ourselves that persuades us. It was not "signs" that convinced the earliest believers, his own disciples, but it was what they saw in him. He was their friend, their dearest friend, before he was their risen Lord.

How remarkable it is that of all the blessings Jesus bestowed upon his disciples he included the gift of friendship! *You are my friends,* he assured them. If for a moment we imagined Jesus calling our name and telling us "_____, you and I are friends," it would surely be over-whelming. Why not go on and fill in your own name and hear Jesus accept you personally as his friend? It is one way to accept his gift of friendship.

It is a good way to start the day. "My special Friend will be with me today," we can say as we begin each day. Since imagination is a gift of God we should use it in practicing friendship with Jesus. We can imagine him at our side as we drive to work. We can talk with him. We can listen to what we suppose he would say about this or that difficulty. Or we can imagine that he might say nothing, but he is nonetheless there as the Friend that understands. Why cannot Jesus be as real to us as Friend as he was to Peter, James, and John?

There is more to this than simple friendship, as great as that is. It can be and will be, if we make it so, a transforming friendship. We are all occasionally with people that we admire. They have traits that we would emulate. We sometimes read about such heroes, and we may wish that we could be like them. Jesus is especially that way. We see his great love and patience, his forgiveness and forbearance, his acceptance of the poor and the rejected, his utter commitment to and reliance upon the heavenly Father, his wisdom and his humility, his simple goodness. His manhood impacts us so overwhelmingly that we see God in him. We want to be like him, and this is a transforming experience. It is especially so when we accept his gift of friendship and allow him to dwell in our hearts and in our presence as Friend.

The transformation is like this: Jesus as the Son of God became the Son of Man so that we the sons of men might become the sons of God. To become like Jesus is what it is all about. This we do by being his friend and accepting him as our Friend. Unlike the heroes we may admire on the screen or in books, who at their best are always less than perfect, Jesus is not only perfectly exemplary but he supplies the power to transform us into the likeness of himself. The great dynamic is love - "the love of Christ constrains us."

This is why Jesus makes us his friends rather than slaves. "No longer do I call you slaves, for a slave does not know what his master is doing." Slavery stands for bondage, legalism, oppression, while friendship means liberty, openness, fellowship. As Jesus spoke to his disciples of friendship he said an amazing thing: "All things that I heard from my Father I have made known to you." Friends are comfortable with each other; they have nothing to hide. Jesus shared with his friends the intimacies of heaven and by way of parables he unfolded to them the mysteries of the kingdom. He made them his friends, not slaves.

Jesus laid down one condition for the gift of friendship: "You are my friends if you do whatever I command you." He is the one person in history who could properly say, *Follow me.* When Matthew the tax collector heard that invitation, he left his office and embarked upon an entirely new career. We are not to suppose that Jesus issued that invitation as a complete stranger. Jesus had already in some way impacted Levi's life. He may have

listened at the edge of the crowd as Jesus taught in his home town of Capernaum. Perhaps Jesus knew that Matthew had said in his heart, "I would like to be like him, but it is too late in life and I am engrossed in all these things." When Jesus confronted him and issued the call, *Follow me,* the old revenue man who knew all too well how to say no, found him irresistible. He found a Friend that changed his life.

One of the famous sermons of yesteryear, by Horace Bushnell, was called "The Impulsive Power of a New Affection." That explains why Levi left his toll booth and why Peter left his nets. "The kingdom of God is not talk," Paul assured his readers in 1 Cor. 4:20, "but power." It wasn't so much what Jesus said that provided the impulsive power to change men's lives, but the radiance of his life and the joy of his spirit. There was no way to explain him. One could only accept him or reject him. They could see that the kingdom of God was in their midst when he was with them.

The likes of Matthew Levi and Simon Peter launched out - the impulsive power of a new affection - and left everything behind. It was an adventure of friendship. First they found a Friend and at last they found a Savior.

We must believe that he can be as much our Friend as he was theirs. We do not have to be good, for they weren't. It is not a matter of how hard we try, for in their case it was not a point of effort. It is a matter of accepting the gift, God's gift of friendship.

> Hush, I pray you!
> What if this friend happens to be — God?
> (Robert Browning)

—the Editor

FRIENDSHIP

You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you. -*Dale Carnegie*

It is one of the severest tests of friendship to tell your friend his faults. So to love a person that you cannot bear to see a stain upon him, and to speak painful truth through loving words, that is friendship. -*Henry Ward Beecher*

The only way to have a friend is to be one. -*Emerson*

Friendship is always a sweet responsibility, never an opportunity. -*Kahil Gibran*

Better are the blows of a friend than the false kisses of an enemy. -*Thomas A. Becket*

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JESUS CHRIST: BASIS OF FELLOWSHIP

God is faithfu4 by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. — 1 Cor. 1:9

Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. — 1 Jn. 1:3

Jesus said to him, "Follow me." And he arose and followed him. — Mt. 9:9

A few years back I was invited to a Jesuit college to serve as a judge for a program that the Jesuits called "propositions for public examination." So I listened as the students defended their theses and afterward gave my evaluation. Taking a page from the Jesuits, I would like to do something like that in this article, and allow you the reader to be the examiner.

My proposition is: It is right, appropriate, and scriptural for us to "walk" (have fellowship) with a person insofar as he or she "walks" with Christ. Or to put it another way, Since fellowship is in Jesus Christ, we can enjoy fellowship with all those that are in Christ.

My thesis assumes that those who walk with Christ will be at different levels in their understanding and obedience. They may be ignorant about a lot of things that will afterwards be matters of knowledge. They may always be wrong about some things. But they have one resolve: to follow and to obey Jesus Christ as he leads the way. In heeding the call, *Follow me*, they are forming the habit of obedience. However flawed their thinking may be in some particulars, they are *generally* obedient to Jesus Christ. This means that they not only walk by the light they have, but they continue to seek for more light. As they near the shepherd's call, they respond like faithful sheep.

My thesis implies that there can be no real fellowship except with those who are in heart and mind habitually obedient to Jesus Christ. We may belong to the same church and even subscribe to the same doctrinal tenets, but since fellowship is "sharing the common life" it cannot be merely formal or institutional. It is deeply *personal*, involving those who share a common bond, and it is anchored in Jesus Christ as Lord. This means that fellowship is a matter of being right (in our love commitment) about Jesus. One can be wrong about a lot of things and yet be right about Jesus. So the essence of fellowship is *loyalty to Jesus Christ.* How can there be the sharing of the common life when there is no real loyalty to Christ? But how can there not be fellowship when there is loyalty to Christ?

And we must show great caution in our judgment of who is following Christ and who is not, who is sincerely committed and who is not, and who is loyal and who is not. If people look like Christians and act like Christians and profess the faith of Christians, it would seem appropriate to regard them as Christians. I had rather err in accepting someone as a Christian who seems to be one but is not than to err in rejecting someone as a Christian (for whatever reason) whom the Lord accepts as a Christian.

The above passages are enormously important in understanding the nature of fellowship and in sustaining my proposition. The first one, 1 Cor. 1:9, assures us of a truth we are slow to learn: *that the domain of fellowship is in God's control not ours.* God calls us into the fellowship of Jesus Christ. It is a gift that we accept or do not accept. Fellowship or the shared life in Christ is not a commodity that belongs to a church, to be extended or withdrawn at its discretion. Nor do we receive or exclude people from "our" fellowship as if it were ours to dispense at will. We are to accept fellow believers as part of the fellowship on the same condition that Christ accepted us, according to Rom. 15:7, and that means the standard of acceptance is less than perfect. In fact, Rom. *5:6-8* makes it clear that it was when we were both weak and sinful that Christ accepted us. We are to show the same mercy toward others in our practice of fellowship.

The second passage, 1 Jn. 1:3, makes it clear that fellowship is based upon the fundamentals of the good news (gospel). The apostle John refers to "what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you," and it is that message that brings us into the fellowship. When he goes on to say in verse 4, "so that our joy may be complete," he refers to the joy that we have as fellow Christians in communion with Christ.

The third passage, Mk. 9:9, has to do with the call of Matthew Levi, the tax collector. At the call of Jesus the revenue man left his tax office and followed him. Levi was at that moment in fellowship with Christ. And when Simon the Zealot heard that same call he too followed Jesus. A Zealot who hated everything that smacked of Rome and a Roman tax collector were now sharing a new life. Because of Jesus, Simon laid aside his dagger and Levi his tax records, and they forgot their enmity toward each other. They now shared a common life. Jesus now made all the difference in their lives.

When they heard the call they followed Jesus. This is the meaning of discipleship and this is the meaning of fellowship.

There are of course other indicators of Christian fellowship, particularly the Lord's Supper and baptism. Baptism is the act of induction into the fellowship, and because of that is submitted to but once, while the Lord's Supper, which is observed frequently, is a

continual expression of the communal life in Christ. We may conclude, as a general rule at least, that wherever there is a community of believers in "the fellowship of the Spirit" there is the practice of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

But fellowship begins with the call of God in our hearts to follow his son Jesus Christ. We have a great deal in common with anyone who has heeded that call. To the extent that he or she hears the call and responds to it in following Jesus Christ to that extent we are in fellowship with him or her. There can be no other basis for Christian fellowship. While that person will surely be baptized (even if Levi and Simon may never have been) and eventually break bread with other disciples, it is in being a *disciple,* one who walks with Christ, that is the beginning of fellowship.

The lowly Roman Catholic nun, who works with the bums on Skid Row or with the dying on the streets of Calcutta, may be some distance from us on many doctrinal issues. But surely my thesis is true, that I can work beside her and love her and count her my sister in the fellowship of the Spirit because she is where I am, *following Jesus Christ according to her understanding.* She doesn't have to approve of my hangups and I don't have to endorse her errors, but we can walk together to the extent that we walk with Christ. *—the Editor*

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Highlights in Restoration History . . .

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S FAVORITE SCRIPTURES

Even though young Alexander Campbell had been a close student of the Bible since boyhood, he did not preach his first sermon until he was well into his 22nd year. But once he started he never let up. He gave 106 public addresses his first year. Having never spent a day in bed sick until he took to bed to die in his 78th year, he kept up an incredible schedule of speaking engagements over a span of *56* years.

Only a few weeks before he died he gave his last public discourse in the old Bethany Church of Christ, which still stands and has recently been restored and renovated, and it can be seen by those who visit Bethany. His last sermon was on the majesty and glory of Christ as set forth in Eph. 1, which was one of his lifelong themes. His biographer, Robert Richardson, says this was one of the most interesting and animated discourses of his life, dwelling in the most eloquent terms upon the "spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Even though he was now aged and ill, in that moment he returned to his old self as he spoke of the divine purposes being fulfilled in Christ.

His first sermon, which was on July *15*, 1810, was in a grove on a farm near Washington, Pa., and his text was Mt. 7:24-27, which begins with: "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock." He stood behind a makeshift stand, and even though this was his first sermon he exhibited those qualities that were to mark his preaching for more than a half century: unaffected simplicity, a clear and commanding voice, the power of generalization, taking wide and expanded views. Even when Mr. Campbell spoke for an hour or more and sometimes with great intensity and animation, he almost never gave the slightest gesture and seldom moved from his tracks. And in this first sermon he did what became habitual with him: fixed the audience's attention upon the great truths of Scripture and yet pointed to the practical lessons inherent in those truths.

Campbell's first sermon reveals that he was never a "boy" preacher or even an "adolescent" preacher. He was born full grown or nearly so. The response of his audience, who were seated on planks or on the grass, was one of wonderment, that a man so young and inexperienced should be so able. The older folk whispered to each other in subdued tones, "Why, this is a better preacher than his father!"

A week later he gave his second sermon on a theme that he would emphasize all his life, Christian unity, based on Gal. 3:27-28:

> For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

He observed that believers in Christ are members of the same body, branches in the same vine, and stones in the same building. He pointed to the folly of sectarianism and urged oneness in Christ.

These first sermons were written out in full and memorized, a practice that did not long continue. However, Mr. Campbell never used notes and always drew upon a reservoir of knowledge that appeared to be both effortless and limitless.

A week later he spoke on Mt. 16:26: "For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" On and on it went, not only on Sundays, but once he began his travels he would speak daily, sometimes twice a day. Beside his public presentations would be several hours of conversations in various homes. Evening service was usually "at candlelighting time," which left the long evenings for teaching in family circles, which usually included visitors that had come from a distance to hear Alexander Campbell.

Dr. Richardson now and again reveals the favorite texts that Campbell used both in his public discourses and private conversations. Here are some of them:

> And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was no place for them. (Rev. 20:11)

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. (Ecc. 12:13)

> Search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me. (Jn. 5:39)
>
> Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. (Rev. 3:20)
>
> For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith that worketh by love. (Gal. 5:6)
>
> How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation. (Heb. 2:3)
>
> To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. (Rom. 8:6)

Campbell eventually became critical of "textuary preaching," which usually meant that a sermon was based upon a single text, and turned more to expository presentations, which in this case usually involved an entire chapter. He had his favorite chapters, such as 1 Cor. 13, from which he would discourse for three hours, an hour each on faith, hope, and love! Another was Hebrews 11, which served as the basis for an extensive treatment on the nature of faith. Hebrews 1 was another, which allowed him to teach on the covenants, one of his constant themes. In Eph. 4 he would discourse on "The Seven Unities" and John 3 was his basis for "The Philanthropy of God," another constant theme, the one he presented in the House of Representatives in 1850. Col. 3 and 1 Tim. 4 he also often treated, the latter as the basis for a presentation on reformation.

His favorite chapter may well have been Malachi 4, which was the basis for "The Sun of Righteousness," a discourse he delivered repeatedly during his many travels, its emphasis being on verse 2: "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings." This enabled him to do two things that he delighted in: extol Jesus Christ as the Lord of glory and the Sun of righteousness, and to distinguish between the dispensations in which God has revealed himself to human kind.

There was first the starlight age, he would note, the patriarchal age in which God's revelation was restricted to some heads of clans. The likes of Enoch walked with God in this age. Then came the moonlight age or the age of Moses and the prophets, when there was much more light given, such as Micah 6:8: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what the Lord requires of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Then came for a moment the twilight age, the age of John the Baptist, who announced the coming kingdom and the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world.

Then at last as the sun rises beyond the eastern hills, there came the ultimate Light into the world, the Sun of righteousness with healing in its wings, the new and final dispensation, the Christian faith with its new commandments, new ordinances, new promises, and a new covenant, all centered in Jesus Christ.

It was the kind of thing brother Campbell loved to do. He would range at large in the Scriptures in distinguishing between Moses and Christ, the old and new covenants, and in urging upon his audiences "the ancient faith." He was a teacher extraordinary. While he frequently baptized, he never considered himself an evangelist, explaining in an article on one occasion why he was not. He was a teacher of the Scriptures. He almost never (maybe never) referred to his presentations as *preaching*. They were always discourses! This is consistent with the distinction he always drew between preaching and teaching and between the gospel of Christ and the apostles' doctrine.

Richardson assures us that Campbell was unerringly committed to his purpose before an audience. No jokes, no levity, no personal references, no nonsense. He took his hearers on an exciting and adventurous journey, opening up the Scriptures as they had never seen them before. Raccoon John Smith, for one, who heard him in an hour and a half discourse on the two covenants in Gal. 4, and supposed it had been only 30 minutes until he looked at his watch, said afterward that Campbell had done more in opening up the Scriptures to him than all the preaching that he had heard up to that time.

His biographer also tells us that Campbell was not controversial in the pulpit. He did not respond to critics; he did not "skin the sects" or ever condemn any denomination; he did not argue about points of doctrine; he never indulged in personal criticism. He reserved controversial subjects for the social circle, and as an editor he would engage his critics and press doctrinal issues. But in his public discourses he confined himself to teaching the Scriptures and addressing the great issues and great truths of the Christian faith. And this he did in most every kind of church, in court houses, in open groves, in private homes, in schools, in railway terminals, in legislative chambers.

In his *Alexander Campbell As A Preacher,* Archibald McLean caught the spirit of Campbell as a preacher as well as anyone has:

> He saw in Christ, and in Christ alone, the one true rallying-point for all believers. In his preaching he sought to exalt Christ; this was his sole and supreme aim. He held him up as the only Savior and rightful Lord of all men, and urged them to pay the most punctilious regard to all His precepts and ordinances. Among his favorite themes were these: the coronation of Christ; the mystery of godliness; the glory and dignity of the Christ; the riches of the saints. On no other subject was he so eloquent and grand and enrapturing as on the glories, the majesty and superhuman dignity of Christ Jesus.

—the Editor

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DOES "GO YE" MEAN "GO ME"?

Cecil Hook

Does the "Go ye" of the Great Commission demand that each disciple of Christ join in evangelizing the world? Our "personal evangelists," "soul winners," and campaigners make this an inescapable obligation for each of us. They make us feel so guilty about it that we are swept into their programs, whether we are capable or not.

The unsaved must be evangelized, but all disciples are not equipped for that task. Paul informs us in 1 Cor. 12 that there are various gifts and functions in the body and that all are not the same member, whether a hand, foot, eye, or ear. He assures that "God arranged the organs of the body, each one of them, as he chose." He did not choose all of us to be teachers. Paul emphasizes this point by his rhetorical questions: "Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers?"

Notice that Paul did *not* write, "And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, *everybody* evangelists, some pastors and *everybody* teachers" (Eph. 4:11). Neither did Paul urge, "What you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to *each disciple* who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2).

While many well-meaning men have taught the truth about the differing gifts and functions in the context of these passages, they have conveniently twisted the scriptures and contradicted themselves in order to involve us all in their programs of evangelism. They tend to make anyone feel guilty who does not become active in evangelism. They

also use "He that winneth souls is wise" (Prov. 11:30) as a text for "winning souls" without considering that the Mosaic system was not evangelistic, and that the passage teaches nothing kin to soul winning, except as it is misstated in the King James Version.

Am I making light of evangelism? My career has been spent in efforts to save my fellow sinners, and I am not repudiating that. There is a misdirection that I am trying to correct. This misdirection would identify the body as the local assembly with its members being the eyes, ears, hands, and feet. All of the expressions of these differing gifts are brought under a system planned and overseen by the elders. Any member who does not work in and through the system is made to feel disloyal and nonproductive and to be resisting the elders. If anyone uses his "contribution money" in private ministry, he is robbing God, for his money must be given to the church (elders) so it can be used "in the name of the church" so God will get the glory!

In line with this, we hear much about the work of the church, meaning, of course, the local organized work. Seminars are conducted on how to build a strong church, which is the local corporate group. Ministries are defined, departmentalized, and organized for corporate action headed up by one person who may be a professional minister. So, church letterheads and bulletins list the recognized, and often hired, ear, eye, hand, and foot of the local body.

This developed concept denies, or at least minimizes, that God gives us private ministries. We are members of the body at large. As members of that body, God has given each of us a gift, or gifts — a ministry, or ministries. Each person should recognize his or her own gift and use it to the fullest in individual ministry. This does not mean that one should be disloyal to the local group, work against its interests, or fail to bear some of the financial responsibility for its essential needs.

One person may accept evangelism for his ministry. He may serve by proclaiming the gospel, by writing, by "personal evangelism" - a term invented because of our mistaken concepts, or by use of media. He does not have to ask anyone for permission, report to anyone, ask for money from the church, or operate under a church program. It becomes his own ministry into which the Spirit has directed and enabled him. If others wish to help enlarge his opportunities by support, that is their privilege.

A person's talent may be in business, through which he can develop a life of private service. God can use us where we fit in our circumstance of life. A family, having a special love for children, may take homeless children as their own as their life's ministry. They involve their whole beings in providing the proper care and upbringing for these children. Their money is not put into the church treasury to be sent to an orphanage so the system

can perform the ministry, but they fulfill their God-given ministry. Their "contribution money" is used directly, and no apology for doing it is due the local assembly, the elders, or anyone else.

God has given you a ministry which can be free of church-related tensions. Oh, that I had realized that 45 years ago! In this life of service we are accountable to God. We may use our time, money, and abilities in doing what we are most at ease in doing. It may be serving the poor, correcting social ills, teaching, evangelizing, writing and distributing literature, caring for an invalid (whether kin or not), serving the mentally ill and handicapped, helping children, reaching those in prison, rescuing those addicted to drugs, or serving the aged.

Although I have enlisted many children for bus routes and Vacation Bible School by door-knocking, I never converted one adult in my countless efforts. I no longer feel guilty because I do not go out door-knocking since I now see that God did not give me that gift.

While my career ministry in the system has not been dismally ineffective, it has been filled with the frustration due to working in areas where I had no gift. Since retiring from church programmed ministry, the Lord has given me a ministry through writing. Through my first book alone in a two-year period I have taught an average of *450* person-lessons per day, which would not have been accepted from the pulpit. I did this without asking anyone, without answering to any but God, and free from the tensions of the professional ministry. I did not realize that life could be without tensions. This is the joy of service that the Spirit intended for us to have through use of his gifts.

Yes, "Go ye" means "Go me," but only in the ministry into which God called me. Through it, hopefully, others may see my good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven. And that is evangelism also. *—1350 Huisache, New Braunfels, Texas 78130*

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OUR CHANGING WORLD

The Superdome in New Orleans will host 50,000 "Charismatics" July 22-26 for the Congress on the Holy Spirit. Virtually every denomination will be represented, including Churches of Christ. If interested write to Charismatic Renewal Services, 237 N. Michigan St., South Bend, IN 46601, or you can call free to 1-800-537-8390.

The 3.1 million member United Presbyterian Church will have its 199th General Assembly in Biloxi, Miss. in June. They will vote on moving their headquarters from New York and Atlanta to Kansas City. Since the move will cost $30 million it may not pass. A more controversial issue concerns the church's position toward Jews. A document before the Assembly calls for more dialogue with Jews and a better understanding of the Christian's Jewish heritage. Evangelical Presbyterians object to the document on the grounds that it implies that the Jews do not need Christ and should not be evangelized. They note that whenever Jews enter into dialogue with Christians they have a hidden agenda which disallows any discussion of the real issue, the Messiahship of Jesus. So they insist that there can be no honest dialogue between Jews and Christians if Jesus is excluded.

In a recent issue of *Ensign* Norman Parks has an article on "The Self-Perpetuating Eldership," Carl Ketcherside on "The Final Addressees," and James Albert on "The Assurance of Salvation." The journal is in its 15th year and has had a real impact for freedom in Christ. The sub rate is $5 a year and the address is 2710 Day Rd., Huntsville, AL 35801.

A sample copy of *Paraclete Journal* was recently sent to 12,000 Church of Christ ministers. A sample copy will be sent to anyone for the asking, and you would do well to ask: Box 1218, Springfield, OH 45501.

Ouida and I are hoping to attend the 12th Assembly of the World Convention of Churches of Christ in Auckland, New Zealand, Nov. 2-6, 1988. I was recently in Kansas City as a member of the executive committee planning for this significant event. I call it an "umbrella convention" since it is the one convention that is open to all within the Stone-Campbell heritage throughout the world. Along with meeting "Campbellites" from around the world you can also have a dream vacation in one of the world's most beautiful countries. For details write to headquarters: WCCC, First City Bank Center, 100 N. Central Expwy, Suite 804, Richardson, TX 75080. One feature will be a celebration of Alexander Campbell's bicentennial birthday anniversary.

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BOOK NOTES

One of the most informative and liberating studies on church polity is *The Role of Elders in the New Testament* by Waymon Miller. This book is now in its fourth printing. It is a bargain at *$6.50* postpaid.

W. H. Hanna's *Biography of Thomas Campbell: Advocate of Christian Union,* first published in 1935, has been republished by College Press and we will send you a copy postpaid for $11.95. F. W. Kerchner, who wrote the foreword for the original edition, heralded it as next to Richardson's *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell* in significance. It is definitely a "must" for those who would study the Campbells. We can supply Richardson's *Memoirs,* also in a reprint edition, at *$23.95* postpaid.

When one brother read Walt Yancey's *Endangered Heritage: An Examination of Church of Christ Doctrine* he was so excited he could not sleep. Now he is sending a copy to every Church of Christ minister in his state. The uniqueness of this book is that it was written by a man in the pew, a scientist and a fourth generation member of the Church of Christ who all these years has been listening, reading, and taking notes. And now he speaks, with love but no holds barred. It is just as well that no one can find him! $12.95 postpaid.

For only $10.50 postpaid we will send you *The Doe of the Dawn*, which is the bound volume of this journal for 1983-84, beautifully bound in hardcover, dustjacket, preface and table of contents. With this library edition you can give your loose copies to someone else. The bound volume for 1985-86 is still at the bindery.

You can have your own copy of Leroy Garrett's *The Stone-Campbell Movement* in two ways. Buy it at $21.95 postpaid, which is what most do, or you may get a copy free gratis when you send us a club of eight subs at $24.00 each, new or renewal (including your own), total $24.00. This enables you to introduce the paper to others, which is how many of our readers discover us.

William S. Deal's *Unequally Yoked* is a much needed book in that it deals with a tough question that is seldom met headon, which is, What should a Christian do when his or her spouse is unsaved? Written by a pastor, it offers help and encouragement in light of God's word. You will be interested in how he answers the question of who takes the lead in a "mixed marriage." $5.50 pp.

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READER'S EXCHANGE

As for general intents of this church and myself personally, I believe we all strongly desire to remedy some of the bad feelings and non-productive impasses that have been created here by a theology of exclusivism and self-generated righteousness. The world is

not so foolish as to misunderstand. Indeed, the shrinking influence of our movement is due to the fact that they do understand and right reject the unchristian attitudes and thinking we have been doing. - *Robert Barkley, Community Church of Christ, Brownwood, TX.*

My hope is that by 2009 we can have all the Christian Churches meet together in Pittsburgh. Together we stand, divided we fall. -*Larry Toney, First Christian Church (Disciples), New Kensington, PA.*

(Larry is bicentennial-minded. The year 2009 will be the bicentennial year for the publication of Thomas Campbell's *Declaration and Address.* In 1909 the gathering in Pittsburgh was one of the most significant in our history. My hope is that by 2009 we will have all accepted each other as equals on the basis of the Lordship of Christ, thus making sectarianism among us a thing of the past. And we don't have to wait until 2009 for that. In that year let us be able to say that we have at last understood and acted upon the great principles of unity set forth by Thomas Campbell in 1809. -*Ed.)*

Though one memorize the whole Bible end believed it to be inspired and inerrant, he might still be lost. Yet another may never have seen a Bible but only heard the gospel preached, and be committed to Jesus Christ as Lord of his life, and be saved. -*Harold Fox, Edgar, NE.*

When I read in Roger Woodward's unity presentation that there is a revolution going on, I said, *Hallelujah! -Edna Stapleton, Terre Haute, IN.*

For many years I have noticed that when we have a series of gospel meetings that our preachers take up most of the time justifying our position on name, instrumental music, and the like, and they hardly ever get around to preaching Jesus to the lost world. So it is with our radio programs. The apostles preached Christ and him crucified. What do you suppose the result might be if all our preachers did likewise? -*Missouri* (Name withheld)

My family and I will be returning to Kenya this year, God willing, sponsored by both Churches of Christ and Christian Churches. For more than 27 years I have had the unity of our divided fellowships on my heart. Now, at last, I pray that I may have a small part in bringing that unity about both in Kenya and with those who support our mission. I would appreciate hearing from any churches or individuals who might be sympathetic. I am finding warm reception from Christian Churches, but Churches of Christ, even when they are in favor of what we are attempting, are reluctant to help us. They fear "the brotherhood." I especially need the support of a few brave Churches of Christ. -*James Moore, 7886 NW 40th, Bethany, OK 73008, (40S) 495-3575.*

Chester Woodhall and his daughter were recently videotaping some outdoor scenes for Television Zambia. Since there is presently a crocodile epidemic in Zambia, they kept an eye out for any sign of those critters. Then came a green snake slithering across the set during the recording. The Woodhalls do a lot of radio and TV programs but snakes do not normally attend! *-Angela Woodhall, Box 22297, Kitwe, Zambia.*

Address all mail to: 1201 Windsor Dr., Denton, TX 76201*

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